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Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6870th meeting

Monday, 26 November 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri	(India)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	Togo	Mr. Kandangha-Bariki
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Working methods

Letter dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Representatives of India and Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/853)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-60476 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Working methods

Letter dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Representatives of India and Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/853)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/853, which contains a letter dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Representatives of Portugal and India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate on the Council's working methods. It has been a year since the Council, under Portugueuse presidency, held the most recent debate on this issue (see S/PV.6672). That debate demonstrated yet again the great interest that this issue raises among the wider membership. Council working methods are indeed a matter of interest to all United Nations Members.

Open debates are held so that we can listen to the wider membership. Indeed, the debate last year was very useful, with many relevant inputs by Council members and non-members alike, focused on ways to enhance transparency, efficiency and the interaction of the Security Council with the general membership. They were instrumental in feeding the Council's work on this area during the months that followed. As a follow-up, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters, which I have chaired since January, met to discuss the set of measures proposed during the debate in order to identify areas of future work. In that same vein, members of the Informal Working Group exchanged views with members of the group of five small nations on the proposals put forward by that group, which reflect many of the ideas floated during the debate.

To improve the working methods, we have to start by improving the way the internal work of the Council is done.A significant part of the Council's work is done in consultations. While the Council has made an effort to meet more often in public — a trend that should be encouraged, in particular by presidencies — consultations are indeed useful in helping the Council prepare its decisions. However, questions of transparency and inclusiveness remain important within the Council, to Council members, as was noted in several interventions at the debate last year. There is indeed work to do in the internal aspects of the Council's work.

Following consultations organized by the Council in March, during the United Kingdom presidency, a discussion was held on further measures to improve interactivity, better planning of work and better use of conference resources. Those same aspects were further developed in the Informal Working Group and later on condensed in a note issued by the President in (S/2012/402). The underlying idea is to stress the informal aspects of consultations — such as abolishing pre-organized lists of speakers and avoiding reading out lengthy statements by briefers and Council members — better organization of resources to allow more space for subsidiary bodies to meet, more use of video teleconferences to avoid the costly presence of briefers, and better planning of work by readjusting mandates and reporting cycles with a view to evening up the workload throughout the year, thereby leaving more time for the Council to prepare decisions and discussion of conflict prevention.

Another aspect that was mentioned in several interventions at the last debate was the practice related to the work of pen-holders and the process to appoint the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies. The Informal Working Group is now concluding the consideration of this question in a draft note that deals with issues of enhanced participation, inclusiveness and exchange of information among Council members. These are

crucial elements to enhance the Council's efficiency and ultimately help promote the necessary consensus-building within the Council. I hope, with the support and flexibility of all members of the Working Group, to conclude the work on this within the coming weeks.

On the external aspects of the Security Council's work, the Working Group is considering further measures to improve transparency and interaction with the wider membership. A draft note is now being discussed on ways to improve open debates by enhancing the interactivity of council members with non-council members in debates; by ensuring a better follow-up of open debates, including by reflecting relevant inputs of non-members in the outcome of an open debate, when there is one; and by improving their efficacy through the use of concept papers, shorter interventions and summaries of the debate, whenever possible. We are also considering measures to improve the annual report by reinforcing aspects related to the interaction with non-Council members prior to the preparation of the report and by providing more substantive information in the report and in its presentation to the General Assembly on the work of the Council.

Monthly assessments by Council presidencies are very important documents. When circulated early after the end of the respective month, they can be particularly useful instruments to elucidate on the work done. Also very useful in this regard are informal briefings to the general membership by Council Presidents once they finish their presidencies, which could be done as a matter of practice, adding to the briefing that is already done at the start of each presidency.

These are all aspects that have been discussed in the Informal Working Group and are being considered through a draft note we expect to adopt in the coming weeks. They include several ideas and proposals that were highlighted last year at the open debate. This is why we think that regular open debates on working methods, such as this, are important. They provide the necessary stimulus to the Council by signaling the areas of concern and avenues to improve its working methods that are very helpful to the Council in taking this work forward.

The note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) remains a landmark. It represents an acquis of Council practice that can always be improved, guided by the goals of transparency, inclusiveness and enhanced interaction with the wider membership, the General Assembly and other relevant bodies. As in the past, presidential note 507 shall be updated regularly in the future with subsequent agreed measures aimed at developing and improving the Council's practice.

This debate is yet another opportunity to look to our future work to improve the working methods. In the concept paper prepared jointly by India and Portugal (S/2012/853), some other ideas are included in the bullet points that could assist us in focusing this debate. In addition to the measures that I have alluded to, many others can be addressed, such as ways to enhance interaction with regional and subregional organizations, to better interact with troop-contributing countries in order to ensure a more substantive exchange of views and more fruitful and focus discussions at meetings with troop-contributing countries, to improve the Council's interaction with the chairpersons of the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configurations, or ways to further improve the work of the subsidiary bodies in terms of transparency and interaction with States, regional and subregional organizations, and relevant United Nations bodies in order to increase their efficacy.

It is also important to underline the existing trend in the Council of a more flexible use of meeting formats, such as the Arria Formula meetings and the informal interactive dialogues, which are clearly an evolving trend revealed by the significant number of such meetings last year. They are proving to be very useful as practical ways for the Council to interact informally with individuals and other relevant actors, with clear benefits to Council members in the course of preparation of Council's decisions.

Prevention is a key aspect of the Council in performing its role under the United Nations Charter. Horizon-scanning meetings, also referred to at the last debate, can be very useful in helping the Council to enhance awareness of situations with potential to develop into conflicts. Last year, several presidencies continued to organize such meetings. They can indeed be important opportunities for Council members to exchange views with the Secretariat on new developments in different situations and regions of the world with deterrence potential and to help settle conflicts at an early stage. In our view, this type of informal meeting to promptly gather information and allow space for the Council to act preventively should be promoted. We therefore encourage further reflection on this issue to allow the horizon-scanning concept to be perfected and thereby help dissipate existing

reservations towards a tool that can be truly relevant insofar as prevention is concerned.

We look forward to this debate. I am sure it will be productive and enjoy contributions by all, Council and non-Council members alike. I am also sure that the Council will listen and follow it up in the months to come, in particular in the Informal Working Group. I must say that it has been particularly gratifying for me to Chair the Working Group. I have counted on the support of all members and the diligence of the Secretariat, and I am sure that we will take the work under way to a successful conclusion.

Next year, the work of the Informal Working Group will continue, building on the work in course, the discussions held in the Working Group and the ideas and proposals coming out of this debate. And we will, I hope, assess the improvements achieved next year when the Council holds the next open debate on working methods and the implementation of note 507. It is indeed crucial, bearing in mind the importance attached to this issue by the wider membership, that the Council keep organizing these debates on an annual basis.

We must recognize that some improvements have been made in recent years, but there is always room for improvement. Working methods are always a work in progress and never completed, and the generalized interest in this issue, manifested by the high level of participation here today, is proof also of the relevance of the Council as a principal organ of the United Nations.

In conclusion, have one last word to say in connection with the transparency aspects, the outstanding work of the Secretariat in making available more information on the web, including on mandates and reporting cycles, and the analytical and statistical overview of the Council over the past year, which are indeed very important contributions to promote understanding of the Council's work and the new trends and developments in the area of international peace and security. As Chair of the Informal Working Group, I commend the efforts of the Secretariat in preparing this new set of informative tools, and I welcome the new capacities offered by the Council's web page, which I invite all interested delegations to access and navigate.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to first express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate on a subject that has been the object of such great interest on the part of Member States. I am also grateful for the concept note (S/2012/853, annex) prepared by India and Portugal to guide our discussion, which provides an important list of efforts aimed at improving and modernizing the working methods of the Council and additional measures that we should consider in order to continue work in that respect. I would like to thank and particularly congratulate Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, not only for his statement just now, but also for the very hard work he has done this year at the head of that subsidiary body of the Council, which has made a considerable contribution to progress in that area.

With respect to the working methods of the Council, our main goal must be to identify those areas and matters requiring the attention of the Council in order to achieve a greater degree of transparency, participation, efficiency and accountability as the Council carries out its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. Over recent months, we have achieved some progress. On the one hand, on 5 June, we received a note by the President (S/2012/402) that complements the guidelines contained in the annex to document S/2010/507 with respect to rationalizing conference service resources and strengthening interaction. Other important procedural aspects have to do with penholders, the chairs of the subsidiary bodies, open debates, the drawing up of the annual report to the General Assembly and the monthly assessments carried out under each presidency. We are sure that discussions on those matters will continue in the Working Group, and that we will be able, before the end of the year, to adopt new guidelines for the future work of the Council.

We have also made progress in ensuring a more equitable distribution of the Council's work throughout the course of the year by adjusting mandates and their renewal periods and by aligning their requirements for the presentation of reports. The recommendations submitted in that respect by the Chair of the Working Group in July and duly reflected in the annual report presented to the General Assembly (A/67/2) just a few days ago indicate a good course of action for Council members in their efforts to improve the future planning of Council work.

I would now like to refer to some of the outstanding matters and the ways in which we can address them to achieve greater efficiency.

First, on open debates, my delegation believes that an important development contributing to improved transparency is the increase in the number of open debates organized each month. The participation of non-members of the Council in such debates contributes to the very purpose of illustrating and enriching the background on the basis of which Council members take decisions. Therefore, non-members of the Council have expressed a natural expectation that their concerns and contributions should be taken into account when the outcome document of a debate — in most cases, a presidential statement — is adopted.

Secondly, the established practice of having the President meet every month with the Member States to consider and comment on the provisional programme of work is a very useful practice and makes a significant contribution to transparency in the work of the Council. The Charter and the Council's provisional rules of procedure anticipate having States non-members of the Council be invited to participate in the Council's deliberations on situations that could have an impact on their immediate interests. There are therefore specific provisions that enable them to participate in such meetings.

Moreover, in the concept note already mentioned, reference is made to the importance of an increase in the interaction of the Council and its members with other interested parties. We believe that the Council would indeed reap considerable benefits, if a mechanism were established to improve its links with, for example, regional organizations with subsidiary or complementary responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security, troop-contributing countries and the chairs and country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would like to pay tribute to the extremely valuable assistance that the Council receives from the Secretariat on an ongoing basis and with the utmost discretion. In the past year, we have seen that considerable efforts have been made to improve the Council's web page, those of its subsidiary bodies and the tools available to all Member States and the public in general, including, most notably, the very useful repertoire of Security Council practice. We are grateful for the work and resources invested in that regard, which have led to a noticeable increase in the transparency of the work of the Council and an improvement in the general public's perception of the Council.

Finally, we believe that the discussions on procedural issues and the working methods of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the Sanctions Committees, are of great importance, and non-permanent members can make considerable contributions to those discussions in order to improve the work of those bodies. We believe that it is important to move in that direction.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We attach particular importance to today's debate on the working methods of the Security Council. The fact that it is being held in an open format for the fifth year in a row now shows the unswerving attention that the Council pays to Member States' proposals on improving the procedural aspects of the work of the Council, with the understanding that the working methods themselves and any potential possible modifications to them are the responsibility of the Council itself. That is a very sensitive issue in the context of the reform of the Council, and discussion on that topic should not be subjected to populism. The Council's procedures are constantly evolving, as can be seen from the information contained in the statement just given by the Chairman of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral.

In order to improve and change the work of the Security Council, we must seek to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its functioning with regard to its task of maintaining peace and security. That is the Council's primary responsibility. In the discussion on the Council's working methods, broader topics have often been raised, namely, how successfully and appropriately the Security Council manages to cope with the tasks conferred upon it by the Charter.

We sometimes hear the Council criticized for infringing on the prerogatives of other United Nations organs. We share that concern. Our colleagues know of our reservations regarding the initiatives under discussion in the Council in terms of various topical subjects, in particular generic issues. We believe that the Council should focus on country-related topics and on issues where it must and should take specific decisions.

We also understand the concern as to whether the Council uses Chapter VII of the Charter too often in imposing sanctions, which have, of course, clear humanitarian implications, to put it mildly. We would like to underscore that the Russian Federation

is in favour of the Council using the tool of preventive diplomacy and of its investing in measures aimed at the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Fuller and broader use should be made of the provisions of Chapters VI and VII. Sanctions measures, in particular scenarios in which force is used to settle conflicts, should only be employed when all possibilities for the peaceful settlement of disputes have been exhausted, the threat to international peace and security is clear and a decision to make use of Chapter VIII is supported as broadly as possible by members of the Council. I repeat that all of these are important topics, but in our view they do not fall within the rubric of the working methods of the Council. Of course, the fundamental provisions of the Charter pertaining to the right of veto do not pertain to the working methods of the Council.

In order to make the Security Council more effective and reflective of the realities of our time, we must work painstakingly to improve its working methods. To that end, we have established the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We commend the efforts of the Portuguese chairmanship, under whose leadership the work of the Working Group has taken on a new dynamism. With its specific nature, we note that the Working Group is systematic in its work and undertakes appropriate, constructive interaction with all interested delegations of the Members of the Organization

We believe that improving the quality of the Council's interaction with other United Nations bodies on issues beyond its remit is a key area for improving its working methods. A current challenge is to further improve the effective forms and methods of dialogue between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, other United Nations structures, regional organizations and international partners. We must develop the practice of holding effective consultations between members of the Security Council and countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations. We advocate a reasonable increase in the number of open debates of the Council, while recognizing the great importance of closed consultations. The Arria Formula can play a useful role in that regard.

We are convinced that the aim of improving both the transparency and the democratic nature of the Council would be furthered by a better division of responsibilities of the informal leadership of the so-called penholders. We deem unfounded the prevailing opinion that the so-called penholders have some kind of right to always take the floor first when discussing relevant issues. In our opinion, that is justified only when they are introducing draft decisions to the Council and therefore representing them. In all other cases, discussions should be more informal and there should be no so-called mentoring.

In conclusion, I wish again to underscore that no innovation to improve the transparency of the work of the Security Council should harm its effectiveness or decrease its efficiency. Dialogue on this important topic requires a balanced, professional approach without politicization of the substance of the topic being discussed.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We commend the Permanent Representative of Portugal, Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral, for his dedicated efforts as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We acknowledge the role that the Working Group is playing to advance ways to further enhance the transparency, accountability and overall efficiency of the Council's work.

The interest of the entire international community in the matter under consideration is obvious and arises from the functions of the Security Council. In fulfilling its Charter-mandated obligations, the Council acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations and therefore should be duly accountable to them. Almost one year has passed since the Council's last open debate on its working methods (S/PV.6672), at which a number of important issues were raised. During this period, the Council continued to further implement presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) and agreed on several measures to increase interactivity, inclusiveness and efficiency in the internal work of the Council, as eventually reproduced in presidential note 402 of June 2012 (S/2012/402).

More attention has also been paid to achieving a wider participation of Council members in the decision-making process and to improving the existing practice of penholdership and the designation of chairpersons to subsidiary bodies. The Council has also discussed ways and means to enhance its interactivity with non-members and to promote its responsiveness to their inputs and contributions. Unfortunately, obstacles remain, and more should be done to address existing differences. We hope that the Council will take the

initiative and initiate a process of genuine reforms of the Security Council to meet the expectations of the international community.

It should be noted that the reluctance and sometimes even unwillingness to change stereotypes by preserving existing practices complicate the process of reaching agreement on matters of importance to the United Nations membership. The reasons for keeping the Council's current rules of procedure provisional for decades are also self-explanatory. Today's debate on the working methods, procedures and practices that the Security Council applies in fulfilling its Charter-mandated functions represents an excellent opportunity to identify possible short-comings in areas requiring improvement and adjustments.

We welcome the increase in the number of public meetings of the Council, which amounted to more than 145 this year. The quality of this increase certainly depends on the Council's genuine readiness to take into consideration the views and contributions of non-members and regional and subregional organizations, including through the reflection of their proposals and inputs in the outcomes of public meetings. While we stress the importance of close interaction with regional and subregional organizations to facilitating early response to disputes and emerging crises, appropriate steps also need to be taken to improve the quality of briefings as sources of information in an effective early warning and crisis prevention mechanism.

More should be done to further improve in practice the content and narrative quality of the Council's annual reports as a main communication tool between the Council and the general membership. We welcome the efforts of our Colombian colleagues to make the latest annual report more complete and detailed. Among other things, there is a need to include analysis in the monthly reports prepared by the rotating presidencies, which should also contain more information relating to consultations of the whole. The Council should also resort frequently to Arria Formula meetings to ensure more interaction and informal dialogue with the international community, similar to that organized in May on the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, which was open to all Member and observer States, international organizations, academia and civil society.

Another important issue that requires additional efforts is the Council's control over the implementation of its own decisions. It is unacceptable that a resolution of the Security Council containing imperative demands for concrete action should be ignored or interpreted in a way to avoid their implementation. Special attention should be given to situations involving regional arrangements referred by the Security Council with a view to encouraging the development of the peaceful settlement of disputes or conflicts. Needless to say, the silence of the Security Council concerning the apparent disregard of its resolutions on issues pertaining to international and regional peace and security and attempts to undermine them with ambiguous considerations is dangerous and cannot constitute an accepted practice of the Council's working methods.

In conclusion, let me note that the Council must enhance the efficiency and viability of its working methods. Minor changes to the working methods will stimulate and promote general reforms that could be commensurate with contemporary realities. Real improvements should require a change in approach towards the primacy of general and collective interests over national and individual ones.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling today's open debate and for the useful concept note (S/2012/853, annex). We are also very grateful for the work undertaken by the Chairman of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, the Ambassaor of Portugal, as well as for his presentation today.

Germany welcomes the increased efforts of the Council to interact with and seek input from a broad range of relevant actors, including the wider United Nations membership. Open debates, Arria Formula meetings and the holding of interactive dialogues are regularly and successfully used formats to ensure communication and the exchange of information that are vital for the Council's functioning.

Also, the briefings provided by the Department of Political Affairs represent a particularly important improvement, and we call on all Council members to consider conducting one such horizon-scanning during their respective presidencies. We also welcome the increased use of modern technologies, such as video teleconferencing, in enhancing the timeliness and efficiency of the Council's actions.

An interactive and dynamic relationship with a multitude of interlocutors, such as thematic Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, is crucial

to the fulfilment of the Council's mandate, and the interactive dialogue held earlier this year of the Council with the Chairpersons of the Peacebuilding Commission's country configurations clearly highlighted the potential for further cooperation between the two bodies. For example, the participation of the Chairpersons in Council consultations should also be considered, not least to ensure a broader peacebuilding perspective in the Council.

We also support the enhanced involvement of regional organizations in the work of the Council. Those organizations can play a crucial role in furthering conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding in their respective regions, and thus effectively complement the role of the Council. In that regard, I would like to recall the successful high-level meeting held on 26 September on peace and security in the Middle East (S/PV.6841), which focused on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

While much has been achieved to improve the Council's working methods, we are looking forward to the completion of work that is currently in progress. I would therefore like to provide a brief overview of where Germany stands on some of the main points.

Regarding penholderships and chairmanships of subsidiary bodies, we are of the view that all Council members are eligible to fulfil those functions and that elected members should therefore increasingly be assigned penholderships. Germany is currently holding the pen for Afghanistan, as well as the chairmanship of several subsidiary organs. It has been a very positive experience.

Consultations on the appointment of penholders and chairs of subsidiary bodies for the following year should take place soon after the elections of non-permanent members and before the end of the year, and they should be fully inclusive. The mandates of working groups should be flexible and open to necessary adaptations. In that regard, I would like to state that Germany is ready to consider the expansion of the mandate of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals, so as to also include issues relating to States' non-cooperation in the context of the Council's referrals to the International Criminal Court.

On the issue of enhanced interaction in the context of open debates, Germany views such debates as an important opportunity for Council members to benefit from the input of non-member States. We therefore support the early circulation of concept notes to all United Nations Members and the delivery of concluding remarks by the presidency.

Both the Council's annual report and the monthly assessments can be further improved. The presidency responsible for the annual report should continue to consult informally with non-members well ahead of the report's issuance, and report to Council members on the suggestions and expectations raised in those consultations. Since the monthly assessment is prepared under the responsibility of the presidency, it should allow for a more substantive reflection of the presidency's views and analysis of the Council's work during the respective month.

The reform of working methods is part of a larger comprehensive reform. Let me therefore be clear. We must not stop at addressing working methods only. What is required is a structural reform of the Security Council — a reform that makes it more representative of the world we live in today; a reform that lends the decisions taken by the Council more credibility and therefore greater effectiveness. The desire for real, meaningful reform is more evident than ever. An overwhelming majority of Member States small and large, from the developing and the developed world, see true structural reform as the best way forward. Anything else would address only the symptoms and not the root causes.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. I also thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for setting the scene for our discussion and for his energetic chairing of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We meet today to discuss how we conduct our business and to listen to the ideas and views of the wider membership. It is an important topic. However, when we consider the question of working methods, Council members must be careful not to give the impression that they are more interested in the process than in the product. The key test of the Security Council will always be its effectiveness at preventing and resolving conflict around the globe. What we do here in New York is important as a forum for discussion and for shaping response to events, but we must not forget that our main responsibility is to make a difference on the ground and to save innocent men, women and children from suffering in conflict.

As the Council endeavours to carry out that solemn duty, I think that two principles need to be balanced in order to guide the methods by which the Council carries out that work. First, the Council should be ruthless in its pursuit of effectiveness. Speed can be crucial in dealing with volatile situations of escalating conflict. We need to be able to come together as a diverse group of nations representing the world and arrive at swift and decisive solutions that can make a difference on the ground.

The United Kingdom has championed several working methods to improve the effectiveness of the Council. We have advocated more use of video teleconferences, which happily have become the new standard in Council consultations. We have secured time and space for the important work of the Council's subsidiary organs, and we have argued that the Council must exercise its responsibility for conflict prevention as well as conflict management. That is why we introduced monthly horizon-scanning sessions, which in the case of Yemen, for example, encouraged the Council to pay closer attention to the early warning signs and provided us with the impetus to take decisive action. I recognize that we have failed to convince all other Council members of the value of that exercise, but I am disappointed not to have heard alternative ideas from the opponents for exercising our conflict prevention responsibilities.

Secondly, the Council needs to be transparent and therefore accountable to the United Nations membership and the wider world. All United Nations Members have a legitimate interest in what the Council is doing — or, indeed, not doing. So it is right that the Council listens to and engages with all other United Nations Members, whether through open debates like this one today or other formats, such as informal dialogues or the Arria Formula meetings that we and other Council members have championed. We also share the view of those who think that the Council's official reporting should be more expansive, more analytical and, where appropriate, more self-critical.

We also need to keep the Council's agenda fresh and up to date. As far as I am aware, not a single new item has been introduced on the formal agenda in the past 18 months. Has the world really been so static during that period? We are in the bizarre situation where the list of items of which the Council is seized includes one regional issue that has not been discussed since 1949 but does not include Syria or Yemen, both of which have been major Council preoccupations during 2012. That is not a good advertisement for the responsiveness and transparency of our procedures. How can we properly be accountable to our members if we cannot even be frank about what is on our agenda?

According to George Bernard Shaw, the golden rule is that there are no golden rules. In today's Council, our rules, practice and precedent provide valuable guides to our work, yet even as we respect the rules set out in the Charter, we must avoid becoming hidebound by past practice and we must be ready to innovate and adapt our procedures to the modern world. That might mean adapting to modern technology by using social media and discarding the requirement to use fax machines. But it also means that the Council must do more to engage with the Members of the United Nations and the people they represent in the Organization.

Finally and fundamentally, it is crucial that the Security Council be as effective as possible in addressing the problems faced by the world today. That requires considering any methods of work that promote well-considered and decisive action in the Security Council.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome India's initiative in convening today's meeting on the working methods of the Security Council. Today's meeting — the fifth open debate convened by the Council on this issue — fully reflects the importance the Council has attached to the issue of improving its working methods and shows the attention the Council gives to the opinions of Member States.

I listened attentively to the statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal, and I wish to acknowledge Portugal's efforts as Chair of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

China also supports, and attaches importance to, the continuous improvement of the Council's working methods so as to enhance the authority, efficiency and transparency of the Council and allow it to better implement the mandate conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations. Thanks to the considered efforts of Council members, the Council has made much progress in terms of improving its working methods.

The number of open meetings of the Council has increased significantly. The monthly briefing to non-Council members by the Council's rotating presidency on the monthly programme of work has become a well-established practice. The Security

Council has effectively utilized various formats, such as informal interactive dialogues and Arria Formula meetings, to strengthen its exchange and interaction with relevant Member States, country configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, civil society and academic institutions. The annual joint meetings between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union have served to strengthen cooperation with regional organizations in Africa. With the assistance of the Secretariat, various information and communication technologies have been extensively applied to the Council's work, allowing it to respond more quickly and promptly to emerging developments and allowing non-Council members to find out about Council activities on a more timely basis. The revamped official website of the Security Council now provides more information to its users.

The Charter of the United Nations provides that the Security Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure. There is still room for improvement with regard to the working methods of the Council. China supports the full implementation of presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) on that issue and supports the continued discussion on concrete proposals and measures. I would like to focus on and highlight the following points.

First, over recent years, the workload of the Council has increased continuously. The Council should focus on using its existing resources effectively and on dealing with major, urgent issues that threaten international peace and security. The number of thematic subjects it addresses has also been increasing continuously. Some of them are beyond the scope of the mandate of the Security Council, and the Council should pay attention to the concern expressed by Member States in that regard.

Secondly, the Security Council should pay more attention to preventive diplomacy and use peaceful means such as mediation and good offices to defuse disputes and should avoid the frequent use or threat of sanctions and other measures of force. An effective mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Council's mandates should be established so as to avoid acts that abuse or overstep them.

Thirdly, before adopting resolutions or agreeing on presidential statements, the Council should carry out, in a full and patient manner, negotiations and consultations so as to reach extensive and broad consensus. In that process, it is important that all Council members be given adequate time to consider and study texts. The Council should avoid forcing through texts over which there remain serious differences, so as to safeguard the solidarity of the Council.

Fourthly, the Security Council should continue to strengthen its interaction and dialogue with non-Council members and pay more attention to the opinions of relevant Member States that are connected to the Council's agenda. We support the full utilization by the Council of various mechanisms such as the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and meetings with troop-contributing countries (TCCs). With regard to deploying peacekeeping operations and adjusting their mandates, more attention should be given to communication between TCCs and the Secretariat.

Fifthly, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission should fully respect the division of labour, on the one hand, and strengthen the communication and coordination among them, on the other. China supports the Council's efforts in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations such as the African Union and the League of Arab States so as to achieve synergy.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We join others in felicitating you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate. We also appreciate the concept note prepared by the delegations of Portugal and India (S/2012/853, annex).

Pakistan associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement later in the debate.

We thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for his leadership and the members of the Portuguese delegation for their efficient conduct of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Ambassador Moraes Cabral has highlighted some of the important achievements of the Working Group. The delegation of Pakistan actively contributed to that collective effort.

Improving the Council's working methods is an integral part of comprehensive reform of the Security Council, which is a shared objective of the entire United Nations membership. It is encouraging to note the enhanced attention to working methods in the Council itself. The organization of open debates such as this is a manifestation of the importance that the Council attaches to this issue, as well as of the keen interest

that it generates among the general membership. We should reinforce that trend. Such discussions will translate into tangible benefits only through effective follow-up. The Council should further deliberate on practicable suggestions flowing from this debate with a view to their operationalization. The Working Group's role is of continuous relevance in that regard. The implementation of presidential note S/2010/507 is a work in progress. In our view, such implementation should incorporate and formalize additional substantive aspects of working methods, while also reviewing the status of the measures already integrated.

We would like to focus on three principal aspects of the debate.

First, transparency, democracy and inclusion are fundamental to improving the Council's working methods. Pakistan believes that the advancement of those principles will enhance the Council's accountability to the general membership.

Secondly, the importance of working methods is not merely a procedural matter. In fact, the issues involved, particularly with regard to the decision-making process, cut across the entire substantive agenda of the Council, including the work of its subsidiary bodies. It is not surprising, therefore, that the general membership perceives that it has a direct stake in the question.

Thirdly, improving the working methods will also enhance the Council's efficiency. However, the effectiveness of the Council and, in turn, its credibility is more a function of its members' political will and of the implementation of its decisions and resolutions. We welcome the additional measures on conference resources and interactivity agreed in the presidential note of 5 June 2012 (S/2012/402). Spreading out the Council's periodic workload more evenly throughout the year, where possible, and on a case-by-case basis can also improve planning. The Secretariat's efforts to enhance the availability of information and data, including through the Council's website, are especially laudable.

Allow me to point out some of the areas in which little or slow progress necessitates further concerted efforts.

First, in terms of transparency, there is a need to give real meaning to rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure, which provides that "[u]nless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public". Closed consultations should be kept to a minimum as the exception they were meant to be.

Inside the Council, the decision-making process should be more transparent and inclusive. That entails involvement and consultations with all members, adequate time for the consideration of issues and proper negotiations on Council decisions. The tendency to push decisions with a take-it-or-leave-it approach should be eschewed. Pakistan supports the Working Group's ongoing discussions aimed at enhancing the transparency and inclusivity of the penholder practice, as well as of the appointment of Chairs of subsidiary bodies, since they is closely related to that objective.

To improve access and participation for non-Council members, we should fully implement Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, within the context both of the work of the Council and that of its subsidiary bodies. Arria Formula meetings and informal interactive dialogues offer additional mechanisms for interaction with non-members and other actors. It is pertinent that the presidential note 402 also specifically commits to enhancing interaction with non-Council members and seeking their views. An important aspect of interaction with non-Council members is ensuring that their views are factored into the Council's deliberations, decision-making and outcomes. Pakistan also supports measures aimed at enhancing the interactivity of open debates, including alternating statements by Council and non-Council members.

Given the central role of peacekeeping in the Council's work, we believe it is essential to have more enhanced, substantive and regular interaction and consultation with troop-contributing countries. The Council should also further strengthen its consultation and cooperation with regional organizations and be more coherent and consistent in its approach, in order to make such cooperation more effective.

The Council should rely more on the pacific settlement of disputes, as outlined in Chapter VI of the Charter.

In order to enhance information exchange and outreach related to the Council's work, its presidencies could be more proactive, including by interacting, as required, with non-Council members, the media, the Secretariat, and with the Secretary-General's Special Envoys and Representatives. Interaction between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Council is also important.

With regard to sanctions committees, we are of the view that recent best practices, particularly the institution of an Ombudsperson for the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011), merit consideration for other committees. It is also essential that the process of selecting and appointing the various expert groups be made more transparent, balanced and representative.

In the interest of its overall efficiency and effectiveness, the Council should devote more time and effort to the core issues of international peace and security, in accordance with its primary responsibility, and refrain from encroaching on the mandates of other bodies.

Over the years, non-permanent members have made important contributions to improving the working methods of the Council. That is understandable, since non-permanent members, because they are elected, have a sense of accountability to the wider membership and share the general sentiment on the need to improve the Council's working methods. Conversely, the empirical evidence shows no correlation between the permanent seats and improved working methods. Adding new permanent members therefore is not likely to change that pattern. The understanding and cooperation of permanent members is nonetheless also important in that process. And it is true that, more recently, permanent members have also tried to reach out to wider audiences.

In conclusion, it is in our common interests to improve the working methods of the Security Council. We should therefore continue to pursue that objective collectively and vigorously.

Mr. Kandangha-Bariki (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the question of the Security Council's working methods, the fifth such meeting on this subject and one that the Members of the United Nations as a whole consider more and more important. I am also grateful to Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral of Portugal for the outstanding work he has done as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as well as for the detailed briefing he has just given us.

The presidential note of 7 February 2006 (S/2006/507), modified by the Security Council on 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507), covers the main topics that the Informal Working Group has had to discuss and that are of major interest to the Council. The Group is working with resolve and determination to achieve good results, since the question of the reform of the Council's working methods has been a focus of the concerns of Heads of State and Government since the 2005 World Summit, at which they actually made a recommendation on the subject (General Assembly resolution 60/1). Many efforts have been made since then within the Council itself, but we must recognize that there is still a long way to go before we reach the goals that signify greater transparency and efficiency in the Council's work. That is why, since the open debate of 30 November 2011 (see S/PV.6672), the Informal Working Group has focused its action on new issues, while still attempting to ensure the effective implementation of those it compiled in presidential note 507.

The consideration of those new issues has resulted recommendations on various equally important issues. What emerges is that the good use of conference resources and a judicious reordering of mandate renewal periods throughout the year not only save the Organization money but also reduce the workload for Council members during certain months of the year.

On other questions such as that of the people we term penholders, and of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, my delegation has always believed that transparency, inclusivity and flexibility should govern actions in that regard so as to enable all members to participate effectively and efficiently in drafting resolutions and in the process of designating the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. We hope that the Council will take decisions on such questions as soon as possible, in order to improve its work.

The interaction between the Council and other organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, is a question that has always come up when we discuss the issue of reform. In that regard, the increasing number of open debates, which allow non-Council-member States to share common concerns in a spirit of complementarity and responsibility, is commendable. Some delegations have proposed, in that connection, that the documents the Council adopts at the end of such open debates reflect the positions expressed in those debates, which would mean delaying their adoption. While sharing such concerns, we believe that we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater, since the adoption of such documents would be subject to intense negotiations with non-members,

which is not always guaranteed to succeed and could lead to blockages that would affect the desired result.

My delegation would also like to welcome the dialogue that has begun between the Council and other organizations or entities in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. Such informal interactive dialogues, such as those that took place this year with the delegations of the Economic Community of West African States on Togo's initiative, and with the African Union on the crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, have the advantage of enabling direct exchanges aimed at deciding on the best action to undertake. Such praiseworthy initiatives must be continued, as should the holding of Arria Formula meetings and meetings for the exchange of information and views with troop — and police-contributing countries.

The meeting held this year between the members of the Security Council and the heads of peacekeeping missions around the world was very significant and should become established practice (see S/PV.6789).

Another topic we continue to follow is cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations. In the context of subsidiarity, under Chapter VIII of the Charter, such meetings are of increasing interest at a time when regional organizations such as the African Union are making greater efforts to seek solutions to conflicts both within and between States. We firmly encourage the continuation of that practice and of exchanges with the Peacebuilding Commission, which should be held more regularly.

There are many areas where the Security Council must improve its working methods. They are all equally important, so I will not list them now. What reassures us most is that the Council, which is master of its own agenda, has taken note of the importance of this subject and is tackling it. A great deal of time will be required to adopt all the measures needed in that regard, and even more time to put them into practice. The enthusiasm characterizing the discussion and adoption of measures to improve working methods is lacking when it comes to their implementation. It is in there that more work needs to be done, because it is useless to decide upon something without implementing it.

What is certain is that the road ahead is long and that we need to continue to work together, with external and internal stakeholders, to reach the laudable goal of reforming the working methods of the Security Council, which would enable this principle organ of the United Nations to be more transparent and credible.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this thematic debate on the working methods of the Council. This annual gathering is of particular importance, as it offers the opportunity to the United Nations membership as a whole not only to evaluate the Council's efforts to provide greater transparency, effectiveness and inclusiveness in its work, but also to make proposals and comments to contribute to the progress of the Council's work in this area. We would like to thank the Indian and Portuguese delegations for the joint concept note (S/2012/853, annex) they submitted for the present debate, which will facilitate our consideration of the topic.

The Charter has conferred upon the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The importance of that mandate and its impact on a large majority of Member States explain and justify their following of, and involvement in, the Council's activities and work, which are no longer limited to traditional situations of war and peace but now touch on complex issues such as terrorism and nuclear non-proliferation. While the Council has certainly taken important steps over the years both to improve the effectiveness of its work and to open itself to non-member States, in particular through the adoption of presidential note 507 (S/2012/507), optimizing the effectiveness and transparency of the Council calls for continued effort. In that regard, my delegation would like to make the following comments and observations.

First, I wish to pay tribute to Mr. José Filipe Moraes Cabral, Ambassador of Portugal, who has undeniably breathed new life into the work of the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. He will leave an indelible mark on the work of that Group. Traditionally, the workload of the Council was spread unevenly throughout the year, with a heavier programme of work in June and December. The Council has managed to make some slight changes to the dates for the renewal of mandates and the publication of reports of the Secretary-General and of the various committees so as to distribute them evenly throughout the whole year. That has helped to reduce the pressure on the Secretariat.

The Council has taken a number of steps to make better use of the resources at its disposal, including

consulting on two topics during the same meeting. That has allowed for budgetary savings, which have been redistributed to the subsidiary bodies of the Council. We support the Council's use of new information technologies, in particular videoconferencing for ad hoc briefings. The Council can make use of many formats for its meetings. We note that the number of public meetings is on the rise. We remain of the view that the format chosen for each meeting should take into account the sensitivity and the nature of the topic at hand and the context in which its consideration is planned.

Open debates strengthen the interactions and relationships between the Security Council and the Member States and regional organizations. We believe that such debates should have a specific scope and focus on specific topics. The Council should take full advantage in its deliberations of the views and proposals expressed by the Member States, which must be afforded adequate time to prepare for such debates.

The Council should also make optimal use of its interactions with countries contributing police and troops to peacekeeping operations when discussing or renewing their mandates. The same goes for the Peacebuilding Commission and its various country-specific configurations, which should be systematically invited to participate in the work of the Council in order to take into full account their contributions and proposals.

Informational meetings for Member States and the press on the programme of work, which are organized on a monthly basis by the Council presidency, are an excellent opportunity to discuss the Council's daily work and the aims and priorities of each presidency. Greater participation by Member States in those meetings would strengthen their relevance.

Stronger cooperation has been established between the Council and a number of regional organizations. We cannot but welcome that. We note, for example, that the Council is interacting to a greater degree with the League of Arab States and that a presidential statement was adopted in September, under the German presidency, calling for the strengthening of that partnership (S/PRST/2012/20). The Council could also reaffirm its cooperation with other regional and subregional organizations. Subregional organizations have shown that they can play an important role alongside the Council in solving recent crises affecting their respective regions.

The annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/67/2) has undergone several improvements in terms of both format and content. Seeking the opinions of Member States prior to the drafting of the report is a practice that should be continued and strengthened.

Subsidiary bodies and working groups now occupy an important place in the work of the Council, and their chairs take on a heavy workload. Elected members of the Council should, before being allocated chairmanships, have the opportunity to express their choice and preference regarding their desired role.

Finally, we note with satisfaction the work of the Security Council Affairs Division, in particular the setting up the Council website in the six official languages of the United Nations. The website contains comprehensive and up-to-date information on the Council's activities and those of its subsidiary bodies. We strongly support that effort.

The increased participation in today's debate, which has been underscored by most of my colleagues, clearly shows the interest that all Member States have in the Council's work. Improving the working methods of the Council should remain a work in progress. We believe that effort at improvement should be followed up through a periodic review of presidential note 507 and more effective participation by Council members in that undertaking.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Indian presidency for convening this now annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The Council determines its agenda and its procedures. They are provisional and enable practice to vary according to needs. That is to the Council's advantage, which can adapt itself to new requirements. The review in 2010 contained in the annex to presidential note S/2010/507 on the Council's good practices clarifies our working methods. On that basis, I will make two observations.

First of all, there have been efforts to improve the Council's working methods. In particular, the public nature and transparency of debates have been enhanced. I would like to cite four examples.

First, the majority of Council meetings are now public or include a public part. On matters of general interest, we believe that the open debate formula should prevail. We would like in particular to hear more often from the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Chamber, rather than in consultations.

Secondly, at the initiative of France and the United Kingdom, there is now a regular dialogue with countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations. With the help of all interested delegations, we must now ensure the greater substance of such dialogue.

Thirdly, the President of the Council regularly meets the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairs of its country-specific configurations who are invited to participate in Council debates.

Lastly, thanks to the revamped Council website and regularly updated documents on all mandates and operations, the President and the Secretariat provide all members and officials of the Organization with the information that they need on the work of the Council in all official languages.

There have been further developments this year. In 2012, the Informal Working Group discussed the recommendations put forward by States in the course of the open debate held in November 2011 (see S/PV.6672). That shows our concern in listening to the ideas of all States. Points of agreement were found on the better use of Council resources and greater interactivity in its consultations.

My second observation is that we can continue to make progress and to be innovative. First, we need to better use the tools available to us. By way of example, I should like to refer to field missions that enable Council members to engage with local actors. It is appropriate to draw greater advantage from such missions by defining our objectives more specifically and by ensuring that there is follow-up to the conclusions drawn from such deployments.

Secondly, the Council now regularly holds exchanges with the Department of Political Affairs on threatening situations that justify particular attention. All ow us to recall that through that practice the Council was first able to consider the situation in Mali. In that way, the Council has the means to better anticipate and prevent crises.

Thirdly, we must ensure consistency in our consideration of, and action on, thematic resolutions and geographic agenda items. In that regard, we agree with the recommendations of the group of five small nations on increasing the link between the work of the Security Council on thematic issues, namely, the rule of law, combating impunity, the protection of civilians and emerging situations, and its action on specific situations. The Council has adopted an ambitious framework regarding the protection of civilians, children in armed conflict and combating gender-based violence in conflict situations. We must implement such principles in the context of geographical resolutions. Our annual report does not reflect the total synergy of those two approaches.

In the same spirit, France believes that the sanctions regimes should be applied more systematically to persons subject to arrest warrants of international criminal jurisdiction or the leading perpetrators of acts of piracy.

Fourthly, as I already pointed out in the open debate convened by Guatemala on 17 October (see S/PV.6849), France supports the permanent members of the C ›uncil voluntarily and jointly foregoing the use of the veto in situations under the Council's consideration in which mass atrocities are being committed and, more generally, which pertain to the responsibility to protect.

Finally, as the Council has drawn up new meeting formats that facilitate better exchanges with the United Nations membership and other actors under Arria Formula meetings or interactive dialogues, it seems to us appropriate to amend the mandates of the Working Groups of the Council when new issues emerge. That could be done in a dynamic and flexible way. As we discussed on 17 October, I would particularly like to see the 15 Council members consider developing a broader mandate for the informal working group on ad hoc tribunals.

In conclusion, we encourage the future Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to draw working proposals from this open debate, as Ambassador Moraes Cabral has done in the course of this year.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): We thank you, Mr. President, for your excellent initiative in continuing this important debate and for jointly preparing the concept paper on working methods (see S/2012/853, annex) together with Portugal in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered later this morning by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in its capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The past few years have seen greater demands by the global community for democracy, transparency and accountability. That has translated into positive changes in many Member States. The Security Council cannot remain immune to such complexities of a changing international environment. To remain relevant, the reform of the Council in both its composition and its working methods remain one of the key priorities of the United Nations.

We have seen some progress by the Security Council in responding to those new demands through an increasing focus on improving its working methods. In that regard, presidential note S/2010/507 continues to be a key commitment in order to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. The consistent implementation of its provisions must therefore remain central to the Council's work for ensuring greater accountability. The challenge is to ensure that those measures are made permanent. Those reforms, as well as the provisional rules of procedures, should become permanent so that the Council can have predictable rules that can be followed.

As its decisions affect Member States outside the Council, its work and decisions can benefit from the views of all Member States. South Africa welcomes the continuing progress in increasing the number of public meetings and the greater frequency of public briefings by special envoys and special representatives. It is also worth noting that briefings to the general membership by the incoming and outgoing Presidents of the Council are becoming standard practice. We commend the work of the Secretariat in publishing documents on the mandate cycles and on revamping the Council's website. Those developments increase transparency in the work of the Council.

The Council's outreach has also expanded through the work of its subsidiary bodies. As Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, South Africa has endeavoured to involve the broader membership and non-State entities in the discussions on the Group's agenda by opening up its meetings. We are of the view that other subsidiary bodies of the Council could also benefit from such engagement. In that regard, we welcome the initiative of the Sanctions Committees on Somalia and Eritrea and on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, to engage the relevant stakeholders and Member States in its deliberations.

An encouraging development has been the use of the informal interactive dialogue, which has allowed the Council to interact informally with individual Member States, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and subregional and regional organizations. In our view, given the linkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the Council has benefited tremendously from its increased interaction with the PBC. Given the advisory role of the Commission, however, that interaction should translate into the views of the PBC being reflected when the mandates of peacekeeping missions are considered.

Equally, interaction with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) has been on the increase and has been scheduled well in advance of Council meetings. However, we could benefit from more meaningful and substantive engagement during such meetings, in particular as TCCs are often directly affected by decisions of the Council. The Council's request in resolution 2076 (2012) that the Secretary-General consult with troop — and police-contributing countries to the the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a welcome development.

While those are modest measures, they continue to be important steps towards improving the work of the Council and ensuring greater transparency and accountability. More needs to be done to ensure that those developments translate into substantive and meaningful engagement between the Council and the general membership.

Field visits by members of the Security Council continue to be an important vehicle for the Council's understanding of the situation on the ground and for its ability to make informed decisions. During the past year, visits to Haiti, West Africa and Timor-Leste were beneficial and helped the Council in carrying out its mandate effectively. Equally, visits by Chairs of subsidiary bodies enhance the outreach of such vital bodies. Given the usefulness of such visits, including mini-missions, the Council may wish to consider increased field visits, as well as by Chairs of subsidiary bodies. However, South Africa was disappointed that the Council was not able to visit key regions on its

agenda, such as the Middle East, in spite of formal invitations and the overwhelming support of Council members for such visits.

In our experience, elected members of the Council are confronted by numerous constraints that result from the current configuration, which affords dominance and permanence to the non-elected members. That dominance is experienced at the very start of one's tenure on the Council when the five permanent members allocate the chairmanships of the subsidiary bodies without themselves chairing any — and with little or no consultation with the members concerned. It further permeates the daily work of the Council as three permanent members are penholders on almost every country-specific issue on the Council's agenda. We are encouraged by the efforts of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the able stewardship of Ambassador Moraes Cabral, to promote greater transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness in the appointment of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, penholdership, the preparation of the annual report and monthly assessments. Those efforts must be continued and further enhanced.

In addition, we remain concerned that resolutions and decisions of the Council are often drafted in small groups and presented as faits accomplis to elected members. While we support broad consultation by the Council, its decisions should be open to debate among all members of the Council.

In responding to an increasingly complex and changing world, the Council has become increasingly reliant on regional and subregional organizations that are playing a direct role in conflict prevention, resolution and management. South Africa is particularly pleased with the enhanced strategic cooperation between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council, specifically in connection with the adoption of resolution 2033 (2012). The positive impact of that strategic coordination is evidenced in the subsequent adoption of resolution 2046 (2012), concerning the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the adoption of resolution 2036 (2012), which authorized an increase in the troop levels of the African Union Mission in Somalia. The ongoing consultation between the Council and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, which is playing a leadership role in resolving post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement issues, continues to benefit the Council in addressing the matter.

South Africa is also pleased that the annual consultation between the Council and the Peace and Security Council has become more structured and effective. In that regard, we are of the view that greater strategic coordination between the United Nations and the African Union will enhance the effectiveness of the Council in addressing challenges to peace and security on the African continent. We are confident that the continued cooperation and unity between the two Councils could be of immense benefit with respect to addressing the challenges we face in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau and Mali and the widerSahel region.

In spite of those positive developments, my delegation remains concerned about the tendency in some cases whereby the Council is selective in picking elements of decisions of regional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, that advance the national interests of some members. It is important that the principle of subsidiarity be respected if we are to establish better synergies in enhancing cooperation, especially on the African continent. We therefore call for greater consistency from the Council in engaging with regional bodies.

As a means of concretely fostering cooperation, South Africa encourages the President of the Council to interact regularly with the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council on issues on the agendas of both Councils. The two Councils could further benefit from more interaction and substantive discussion on a regular basis. In that regard, the use of video technology could successfully be deployed to regularize such interaction between the two Councils.

In conclusion, whereas the debate on working methods could be mistakingly considered as a mere technical matter, it continues to be a political debate dependent upon the political will of its members. As such, the Council should continue to work towards increasing and improving its transparency and accountability, thereby ensuring greater effectiveness and legitimacy in its work. In responding to an ever-changing world, the Council and its working methods cannot remain static. They must adapt to ensure greater legitimacy and effectiveness. Cosmetic changes to the working methods do not advance the fundamental need for a reform of the Council and the expansion of its membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We must therefore speed up the reform of

the Council if we are to avoid further erosion of the legitimacy and credibility of this organ.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the issue of the Council's working methods. I would also like to thank you for the concept note you have circulated to inform our debate (S/2012/853, annex). We trust that our deliberations will make it possible to renew the commitment to continue to move forward with improving the efficiency, transparency and interactivity of the Security Council. I would also like especially to thank the Permanent Representative of Portugal for his statement and for his work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We acknowledge the progress that has been made with regard to some of the Council's practices, as well as in connection with improving new measures set out in presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) and subsequent such notes. In that regard, the progress made in the Informal Working Group this year and the measures that have been adopted to improve internal aspects of the Council's work, including the establishment of a new web page in the six official languages, are all commendable. Nevertheless, we believe that there is still room for improvement. In that connection, I should like to highlight some practices that we believe should be improved or more systematically carried out. I should mention that I will be guided by the concept note, insofar as I shall not revisit the great number of items that we have discussed in the past — and will continue to discuss — under the rubric of working methods of the Council.

First, I should like to mention the importance that we attach to the regular consideration of the items on the Council's agenda. In that connection, I should like thank the Secretariat for the broad perspective encompassed by document published on 1 November on the mandates and publication cycles of Security Council reports. The practices of spacing the renewal of mandates, grouping meetings by theme and streamlining requests for reports are not only common sense; they have also demonstrated their utility. That is a specific measure that we support, as it benefits Council Presidents, experts negotiating draft resolutions and the Secretariat itself.

We trust that this exercise will continue to be implemented in an orderly and well-planned fashion. We believe that to that end greater account must be taken of the work done by other bodies, such as the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, in considering budget adoptions for peacekeeping operations. Regarding requests for reports, we heard what the Secretariat said about wanting more specific requests, particularly with respect to the spacing, content and scope of reports.

Presidential note 507 provides us with a number of measures, including the possibility of reviewing certain paragraphs in the light of the criteria that we are continuing to elaborate in terms of spacing out mandate renewals, grouping meetings by theme and streamlining requests for reports.

Secondly, we would as a priority continue to improve the interaction between the chairs of subsidiary bodies, that is, Committees and informal working groups, with all Member States. In particular, we deem necessary the development of a mechanism for interaction with those Member States that are to hold such chairmanships, particularly those that are joining the Council for the first time, so that they not only have the opportunity to voice their preferences but are also enabled better to prepare for their roles and work.

We support an informal process in which all Council members participate that is efficient, transparent and inclusive and that would facilitate the exchange of information on the work done by subsidiary organs. We believe that recently elected members must be consulted immediately following their election. The Informal Working Group is considering proposals to that end, and we trust that it will be possible to approve as soon as possible a President's note on that issue.

Thirdly, we wish to highlight the importance of public meetings and the usefulness of open debates, which promote greater participation of non-members of the Council, with measures that include ensuring that Member States are given enough time to prepare useful contributions; increasing interactivity, by inviting non-Council members to alternate their statements with those of Council members; and promoting more focused contributions, for instance through the preparation of concept notes and, where possible, following up on relevant contributions made by participants after the holding of an open debate. In that respect, I would recall that four open debates were held under the presidency of Guatemala, in October.

My fourth and final point concerns the need for closer cooperation between the Council on the one

hand and regional and subregional organizations on the other with respect to the management of crises and armed conflicts. It is important to increase the number of Security Council consultations held with regional and subregional organizations playing an active role in crisis resolution and the settlement of armed conflicts, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, especially when the Council is acting under Chapter VII of the Charter. That would ensure greater efficiency in the short, medium and long terms with respect to finding lasting solutions to crises.

We deem it important to continue to be innovative and to adopt other measures, with the necessary political will on the part of Member States, particularly the permanent members, in order to improve the working methods of the Security Council. Transparency, accountability and consistency are key elements that must obtain for the Security Council in all of its activities, approaches and procedures.

There is no doubt that improving the working methods of the Council would contribute to strengthening its capacity to maintain international peace and security and to administer efficiently and effectively its growing workload and the multiplicity and complexity of the items on its agenda.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): The United States welcomes today's discussion, and we thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for his diligent work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Under the United Nations Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility in the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. To fulfil this most critical of mandates, the Council must continually strive to improve its working methods, with a focus on enhancing its effectiveness and optimizing transparency. The Council must be able to act quickly and with a high level of flexibility, and we have already taken some notable steps in that direction, such as our quick turnaround meetings this month to discuss the situations in Gaza and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We should build on this, while remaining mindful that Article 30 of the Charter mandates the Council to adopt its own rules of procedure.

The Council has also increased the accessibility of its work to Member States and the public. Last year, less than 10 per cent of the Council's meetings were private, compared with almost 30 per cent in 2002 — a very good trend. The monthly assessments produced by Council Presidents provide the broader United Nations membership with a regular snapshot of the Council's work. In addition, we intend to propose that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions hold open meetings, similar to those we already hold for the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning Counter-Terrorism, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the sanctions Committees. Such meetings would allow the Chairman to explain the Group's mandate to Member States and to provide another forum to hear views on working methods.

In July, the Council President traditionally meets with Member States to solicit views on the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The United States, as Council President for July 2013, looks forward to continuing that practice and to receiving suggestions on ways to enhance the report.

The United States values the participation of all Member States in the Council's open debates, such as the one today, and in the our various informal discussions, as well as in country — or region-specific meetings and informal processes such as groups of friends. In the past, we have also welcomed the chairs of country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, subsidiary bodies and sanctions committees to brief the Council or participate in discussions. Such important interaction helps the Council mitigate, or, hopefully, prevent, the recurrence of the conflicts on our agenda, and also consider new threats. Arria Formula meetings, such as the Council's session with the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, are an important tool for us to hear the views of interested Member States and of civil society. We should look for ways to discuss more issues in this manner.

While the Council's formal meetings make headlines, much of our work occurs outside the Chamber, especially in negotiations on the Council's resolutions and statements. On these, Council members should consider carefully the views of other Member States, including those expressed in letters to the Council, and consult with concerned States about the content of Council products.

Beyond greater transparency and interactivity, we must keep working to make the Council more effective. Increased use of video teleconferencing has provided the Council with better, more timely information

on existing and emerging conflicts, enabling the Council to maintain its vital role in early warning and conflict prevention. In 2009, the Council held one video teleconference; in 2011, we held 26. In addition, comprehensive mandates designed by the Council, such as those supporting the safety and security of women and children, have proven valuable in resolving conflict and assisting stability and recovery in post-conflict situations.

Indeed, a more effective Security Council must remain our collective goal. Increased transparency on the participation of the Council and its engagement with the broader United Nations membership can support that goal, but proposals must be carefully assessed to ensure that transparency and effectiveness are mutually reinforcing, and not at cross-purposes.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of India.

At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral, Permanent Representative of Portugal, and his delegation for co-authoring with my delegation the concept note for today's open debate (S/2012/853, annex). I would also like to put on record our deep appreciation of Ambassador Moraes Cabral's stewardship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions this year. His active involvement and guidance have enabled the Working Group to consider several issues related to the Council's working methods in order to promote transparency and the greater involvement of elected members in the Council's work.

The Security Council is mandated by the United Nations Charter with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. What the Council does and how it acts to discharge its responsibility is thus of interest to the entire international community, not only to Council members, let alone the permanent members.

Over the years, there has been a growing realization that the Council's composition, rooted in the situation obtaining in 1945, and its working methods are divorced from contemporary reality of international relations. This is exemplified by the fact that the Council has shown little interest in consulting with those affected most by its decisions and in adopting transparent and inclusive rules of procedures that remain provisional even after the Council's existence for six and a half decades. The Council has also not acted to harness the capabilities of the wider United Nations membership. Its all-too-evident eagerness to apply methods of coercion under Chapter VII, to the neglect of provisions under Chapters VI and VIII, has proved to be counter-productive in resolving several crises, even while the Council has sought to expand the definition of peace and security with a view to encroaching upon the Charter-mandated roles of other United Nations organs.

Let me briefly share India's perspective on how the Security Council could better its performance. First, the permanent members of the Security Council must recognize, not only individually but also collectively, that the Council must be reformed to make it reflect the contemporary realities of the international system. Secondly, the international community as a whole must be cognizant that enlarging the Security Council to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities would improve its representative character and grant greater legitimacy and credibility to its decisions. Thirdly, there is a need for real improvement in its working methods to enhance the Council's effectiveness and efficiency. Cosmetic changes to working methods alone will not help. Real improvement needs changes in both process and approach, which require reform of the composition of the Council.

Insofar as the working methods of the Council are concerned, the first and foremost necessity is to make them transparent and inclusive. Access to documentation and information is an issue of particular concern, and the tendency to hold closed meetings that have no records should be curbed. During the past two years, we have strongly supported efforts in the Informal Working Group aimed at improving Council's working methods. Some specific points include the following.

First, the Council should amend its procedures so that items do not remain on its agenda permanently.

Second, the reporting cycle should be practical and results-oriented so that issues do not come for consideration so routinely as to bog down the limited time that the Council has at its disposal.

Third, the mandate cycle should be streamlined to spread the Council's work throughout the year.

Fourth, Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter must be fully implemented by consulting with non-Security Council members on a regular basis, especially members with a special interest in a substantive matter under the Council's consideration.

Fifth, penholders should allow the greater and systematic participation of elected members as co-penholders.

Sixth, non-members should be given systematic access to subordinate organs of the Security Council, including the right to participate.

Seventh, the participation of troop- and police-contributing countries in decision-making concerning peacekeeping operations must cover the establishment, conduct, review and termination of peacekeeping operations, including the extension and change of mandates, as well as for specific operational issues.

Eighth, countries having a specific interest in a particular agenda-item must be consulted before an outcome document on that item is adopted.

Ninth, the Council should concentrate its time and efforts on dealing with issues concerning its primary responsibility with regard to international peace and security as mandated by the United Nations Charter, rather than encroach upon the mandate of the General Assembly.

Tenth, before mandating measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council should first make serious efforts to achieve pacific settlements of disputes through measures under Chapter VI. In this connection, the Council must also improve its cooperation with regional organizations, particularly the African Union (AU), since a large volume of the Council's work concerns the African continent. Such cooperation must be serious and include providing assistance for the AU's capacity-building, as per its requirements, not only when some permanent members deem it in their interest.

It is our expectation that these ideas will be pursued by Council members in the coming months so that the views expressed by the wider United Nations membership find resonance in the Council's work and working methods.

In conclusion, let me reiterate India's considered view that genuine reform of the working methods of the Security Council requires a comprehensive reform of the membership of the Council, with expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories, not only improvement in its working procedures. This is essential both to the credibility and to the continued confidence of the international community in this institution.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Before I invite speakers under rule 37, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): I thank you, Sir, for convening this important open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We also thank you for circulating the concept note that guides our discussion today (S/2012/853, annex). And we take this opportunity to thank Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral for his briefing and to congratulate him on his commitment to increased transparency and openness on the part of the Council.

Brazil has been a long-standing supporter of measures to promote the transparency, inclusiveness and accessibility of the Council to the wider membership. We actively worked to further this goal during our most recent term in this body, including when we held its presidency in February 2011.

There is a strong desire on the part of Member States to be better informed about the Council's deliberations. The call for a less opaque Council was once again reiterated in the General Assembly during the recent discussion of the Security Council's annual report to that body (A/67/2). There is, in particular, a wide recognition of the need to promote closer ties between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We would welcome more frequent interactive briefings and the presentation of special reports, in line with the relevant Articles of the United Nations Charter. The Council should also consider mechanisms to follow up on suggestions made by non-members during the debate of its report to the General Assembly.

We welcome recent initiatives to enhance the relationship between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The informal interactive dialogue held in July, under the Colombian presidency, brought up interesting suggestions on how the Council could benefit from the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission. However, there is much room for improvement. We encourage a dialogue between the Council and the country-specific configurations on

a regular basis and in the context of the renewal of mandates.

We commend the recent steps taken by the Council to strengthen its relationship with regional and international organizations, including through their active participation in open debates.

It is important that the presidency of the Council hold informational briefings, not only at the beginning of its monthly work, but also at the end of each presidency in the format of wrap-up sessions. Brazil and Portugal recently held such meetings, which we hope will soon become a regular practice. The growing availability of information on the Council's website, including on mandate cycles, is also positive.

The same should apply to the Council's subsidiary organs. Informative and interactive briefings with Member States have the potential to add transparency to their activities, while offering an opportunity to all interested delegations to provide input to the work of those bodies.

Another issue that stands out as an important part of the discussion on working methods is the question of the interpretation and implementation of the Council's decisions. In many circumstances, especially when the use of force is authorized, objective parameters should be established. This would be indispensable to increasing the accountability and effectiveness of the Council's decisions and avoiding the loose interpretation of mandates.

Finally, allow me to stress that improving the working methods is only a part of the broader need to adapt the Security Council to the new international reality. We reiterate our view that only a real reform of the Council's structure will make this body more representative, transparent, efficient and legitimate. It is our hope that Member States will, sooner rather than later, take steps to promote a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, with an enlargement in both categories of membership.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liecthenstein): We commend Portugal and Ambassador Moraes Cabral for their work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. They have shown outstanding leadership, and we are grateful to them for the work that they have done.

The past years have seen some modest but important improvements in the practice of the Council. The annex to the presidential note contained in document S/2010/507 is a set of measures that the Council itself has agreed to take in order to better serve the interests of the wider membership, as well as its own. More than two years since it was issued, however, the full and consistent implementation of these measures remains elusive. The Working Group has continued its commendable efforts. At the same time, progress remains limited and slow.

A key issue for discussion at this time of year is the more equal distribution of work between the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council as it prepares for a new year in a new composition. We hope that genuine consultations will lead to a good distribution of work in the subsidiary bodies, and we certainly believe that the work of the Council would benefit if non-permanent members were given a more active role in the drafting of draft resolutions and decisions.

We also look forward to improvements in the format of the open debates of the Council. This could perhaps be a topic for the Working Group to take up early next year.

We value the work of the Working Group, but are also realistic about its scope and potential, which are focused mostly on the implementation of note 507. But we must also advance discussions beyond that.

The point of reference for this discussion is, to our mind, draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2, which was submitted to the General Assembly this spring by Costa Rica, Jordan, Singapore, Switzerland and ourselves — a group known as the group of five small nations. That draft resolution dealt with enhancing the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council, the goals on which the Council needs to make tangible progress, as we all agreed in 2005.

The draft resolution received, as is well known, considerable support among the membership of the United Nations, to the point that we are asked to this day why it was withdrawn instead of being put to a vote. While this is certainly not the place to discuss the reasons, we would like to recall the annex to the draft resolution, which should serve as a yardstick in our discussions on the Council's working methods. It continues to reflect the agenda that the Security Council should deal with, according to the membership that

it represents. This is true even for most of those who were not willing to support the draft resolution, as they advanced reasons of procedure rather than substance to explain their reluctance. If the Security Council is serious in its resolve to advance its working methods, it has now been given a detailed menu for doing so.

Of particular relevance in the work of the Council is the area of accountability. Two decades after the establishment of the first ad hoc tribunal, it often seems that the Council finds itself in uncharted territory in this respect. At the same time, the accountability needs and the relevant pressure on the Council are increasing, as is illustrated in connection with the widespread and systematic crimes committed against the civilian population in Syria. There is a clear need for the Council to engage with the rest of the membership in an in-depth and comprehensive discussion of the role that it can play in this respect. The open debate that Guatemala organized on this topic in October (S/PV.6849) was a significant step, while just a first one. We organized a workshop with the International Peace Institute on the same topic earlier this month, and hope that other States, members of the Council or otherwise, will show an active interest in this important subject.

A substantial part of this discussion, while by far not all of it, will naturally revolve around the International Criminal Court, given the competencies assigned to the Council under the Rome Statute. As a first small step in this direction, we believe that a subsidiary body — preferably an existing one — should be designated as the place where relevant topics, including notifications from the Court on non-cooperation, can be discussed. To this end, my delegation, together with the delegations of Costa Rica and Jordan, has submitted a letter (S/2012/860) to you, Sir, asking that the Council take such a step as a concrete follow-up to the open debate held in October.

The use of the veto is a central aspect of the way in which the Council carries out its work or, more frequently, fails to do so. The past year has given ample evidence to this effect. The veto as such is part and parcel of the Charter of the United Nations, which we all have ratified. But it is essential that it not be used contrary to the very purposes and principles of the Organization and that a minimum of accountability be provided in this respect. We believe that a code of conduct regarding the use of the veto would be useful, with a clear emphasis on its use in situations involving genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We encourage the Council, in particular its permanent members, to commence this discussion.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand thanks India and you, Sir, personally for convening this debate and for the concept note (S/2012/853, annex), and we compliment the Ambassador for Portugal on his presentation.

This is an important debate. It is vital that the Council be both efficient and effective in discharging its responsibilities on our behalf, and to do that the Council must be alert to opportunities to improve its processes. We accept that most improvements to Council working methods will be incremental and that individual cases will often steer the nature and pace of reform. But it is also true that this Council has often been slow to adapt to the changing nature of the issues it must address.

For example, much of the Council's work is focused on Africa, and yet the quality of the Council's interaction with the African Union's Peace and Security Council is still much less than it could be and is certainly still much less than it should be. There is a general need for effective interaction with regional organizations, but, given the number of African issues on the Council's agenda, that need is particularly acute with respect to the Peace and Security Council. We echo the comments in that regard by South Africa and others because, despite the excellent work of South Africa and other African Council members, there is still much work to be done. Resolution 2033 (2012) was only achieved after several years of effort. It was an important step, but its implementation is now critical and will require innovative Council working methods.

Many United Nations Members are concerned that the Security Council fails to achieve optimum outcomes because it does not give due weight to the mechanisms available under Chapter VI of the Charter — a point also made by you, Mr. President. Mediation, conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes are not only efficient in that they are much less expensive than costly peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, but many of us also believe that they deliver more sustainable outcomes over the longer term. But again, the Council's working methods are not well adapted to Chapter VI.

We admire South Africa's efforts and determination to transform the output of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa from the theoretical to the practical, but despite those efforts, the Working Group's potential is still not being realized. Indeed, we would like to see a full-scale review of the structure and functioning of all the Council's standing and ad hoc committees, working groups and commissions. We believe that much of their work could be greatly improved.

Likewise, we welcome the United Kingdom's initiative to use horizon-scanning to improve Council capacity for Chapter VI action. But that has largely fallen by the wayside — so much so that in 2012 this Council is much less systematically briefed by the Secretariat on developing situations than it was in the past. We consider that horizon-scanning briefings should be a regular feature of the Council's programme of work.

Past Council members have raised the important issue of the interdependence between security and development and the overlap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We commend Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Turkey and others for keeping those discussions before the Council. But despite their best efforts, the Council's outcome documents rarely get past the point of problem definition.

Everyone seems to agree that there is a problem, but the working methods reforms required for the Security Council to work in partnership with others and to implement solutions are still not being addressed. Likewise, despite concerns expressed over many years, there is still the problem of participation in the Council's work by those with a real interest in the issues under discussion. The Arria Formula and interactive dialogues are useful formats to extend participation, so their use should be commonplace and not an exception. As another way of extending participation, we would urge the Council to consider, adapting as appropriate, the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) example of country-specific configurations. The PBC precedent as a whole probably is not applicable to Security Council processes, but there is still much that could be learned from that model.

The legal responsibility for adapting the Council's working methods rests, of course, with the Council itself, but the wider United Nations membership has a strong political, moral and often financial interest in how well the Council functions. As the concept note says, these matters concern the United Nations Member States as a whole. And so, with such engagement in mind, we propose that in 2013 there should be an open Security Council debate focused on options for improving the Council's working methodologies under Chapter VI. That debate could be preceded by an informal interactive dialogue with non-Council members, which would better inform the open debate and could also result in an outcome document that the Council itself could adopt. After that debate, the Council and interested non-members might consider establishing a dialogue group to address this and other procedural issues on an ongoing basis.

We offer this as a constructive, practical proposal for engaging the wider United Nations membership in this important issue, while at the same time leaving the ultimate decisions to the Council itself. We make that proposal — indeed, all the suggestions we have offered — in recognition and acknowledgement of the open and constructive spirit in which you, Mr. President, have convened this debate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank India for convening this important open debate. I also wish to convey my country's appreciation to Portugal for its work to improve the transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency of the Security Council's work during its chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Historically, Argentina has promoted a more transparent and democratic Security Council whenever it has had the opportunity, including in the course of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform in the General Assembly. It is worth recalling that it was Argentina who, in February 2000, during its presidency of the Security Council, urged the adoption of a presidential note in which newly elected members were invited to participate as observers in informal consultations during the month preceding their term of membership as elected members of that organ (S/2000/155). Also, during its most recent term in the Council, in 2005 and 2006, my country promoted and supported a number of initiatives aimed at achieving greater transparency and access to the Council for the wider United Nations membership.

It would be unfair not to acknowledge the positive developments that have taken place in the last few years, including the holding of these debates, which offer an opportunity for non-Council members to put forward proposals aimed at further improving the Council's working methods and democratizing its decision-making process. The interaction of the Security Council with troop – and police-contributing countries, with regional organizations and with the relevant United Nations bodies, as well as the increase in Arria Formula meetings, inter alia, are developments also worth mentioning. However, we believe that, although necessary, these achievements are not sufficient, as became clear last May when the proposals of the group of five small nations were discussed. Those proposals are in line with Argentina's position on the matter. At that time, Argentina did not deem it advisable to force a decision through a resolution adopted by a vote in the General Assembly. However, there is no reason why the Security Council should not benefit from the contributions that an in-depth debate in the General Assembly can generate. We believe that such a debate on methodological improvements is both appropriate and timely, and in no way impedes progress towards a deeper, comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The new measures being considered by the Council with regard to the process of appointing the chairs of subsidiary bodies and the exercise and role of penholders seem to be going in a good direction, despite the fact that, once again, the discussion of the topic has been limited to Council members, without a participatory process involving the wider membership.

The goal of achieving a more democratic, effective and transparent Security Council requires that the means for its transformation involve an open and inclusive debate with the participation of the full membership. Paragraph 1, Article 2, Chapter I of the Charter, which governs and inspires us, reads: "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members". It is therefore clear that the most legitimate, representative and efficient way to make sure that the process moves forward is to work in consultation with the entirety of the wider membership, while respecting and taking into consideration its expectations.

Lastly, Argentina believes that updating the working methods of the Security Council in response to the demands of the international community for a more democratic and transparent Security Council continues to be an important goal, which Argentina endorses. In that regard, Argentina reaffirms its promise to contribute its best efforts to the process in 2013-2014 as a non-permanent member of the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): We thank the Indian presidency of the Council for organizing today's open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We welcome that this debate has become an annual tradition. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the remarkable work done by Portugal as Chair of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions throughout 2012.

During the past few months, progress has been made on the internal organization of the Council's work, notably with the adoption of the presidential note of 5 June (S/2012/402), which recommends better use of conference resources and greater interactivity during consultations. With the aid of the Secretariat, efforts have also been made to spread the mandate renewals more evenly throughout the year.

Nevertheless, there is certainly still room for improving the effectiveness of the Council's work, for increasing its transparency and for strengthening the interaction between the Council and non-members. The concept note prepared by India and Portugal (S/2012/853, annex) contains helpful suggestions in that regard. Without intending an exhaustive list, I would like to mention a few concrete proposals that would merit further consideration in Luxembourg's view.

First, we should continue to improve the transparency and interactivity of the Council's debates by tailoring the format of meetings to our needs. Arria Formula meetings facilitate exchanges with civil society and non-governmental organizations, the insights and field experience of which can have particular relevance for the Concil's deliberations. Informal interactive dialogues allow for increased interaction, inter alia with non-members involved in a situation on the Council's agenda.

The dialogue on peacebuilding that took place on 12 July (see S/PV.6805), in which Luxembourg was invited to take part in its capacity as Chair of the Guinea configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), was a good example of such interaction. Such dialogues are useful insofar as adequate follow-up is ensured. In our opinion, it is to be hoped that non-members that are

in a position to bring added value, such as the Chairs of the PBC country-specific configurations, will be invited to join the Council's consultations.

Furthermore, developments in Africa and in the Middle East strengthen our conviction that we should continue to ensure the best possible interaction between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations concerned, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States. While respecting competencies and mandates, we believe that the Security Council should strive to make good use of the particular expertise that those organizations, as well as other stakeholders such as the European Union, have to offer.

Finally, we encourage the initiatives taken in recent years to better prepare the Security Council to anticipate threats to international peace and security. A case in point is the practice initiated under the presidency of the United Kingdom in November 2010 to invite the Department of Political Affairs to present to the Council issues that, because of their destabilizing potential, deserve its attention. In our view, that is a good example of applying Article 99 of the Charter, under which the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that may in his opinion threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. If that early-warning function is used wisely, the Security Council will be better equipped to fulfil the responsibilities conferred upon it by the Charter.

In the context of improving the working methods of the Security Council, the case has often been made that adequate follow-up should be given to the Council's thematic debates. To give but one example, the very rich open debate that took place on 17 October under the presidency of Guatemala on the topic of the interaction between the Security Council and the International Criminal Court (see S/PV.6849) clearly deserves such follow-up.

The steps taken after the open debate of 30 November 2011 on working methods (see S/PV.6672) are, in our view, a good example to follow in that regard. We hope that today's debate will encourage further progress and that the useful suggestions made by the many Member States participating in this debate will not go unheeded. As an elected member of the Security Council for the term 2013-2014, I can guarantee that Luxembourg will spare no effort to contribute to the process.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for the work of Mr. José Filipe Moraes Cabral, Permanent Representative of Portugal, for his contribution in his capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Under Article 25 of the Charter, we, the Member States, accept decisions of the Security Council as binding on all Member States. That does not mean, however, that the legitimacy of decisions of the Security Council can be taken for granted. Let us recall that our leaders at the World Summit in 2005 agreed and adopted by consensus General Assembly resolution 60/1, in which the Assembly recommended that the Security Council enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work. In a nutshell, we should remind ourselves of the fundamental structure provided for in the Charter, in which improving the Council's working methods is indispensable for enhancing the legitimacy of the decisions of the Security Council.

From that perspective, Japan attaches great importance to the efforts to improve the Council's working methods. In its capacity as then Chair of the Working Group, Japan took the initiative of compiling the presidential note on the subject in 2006 (S/2006/507), updating it in 2010 (S/2010/507). As duly reflected in the revised note of 2010, significant progress has been made so far. For example, the Council engages more frequently than before in interactions with non-Council members through various formats. Informal interactive dialogues have been utilized this year in relation to some regional and thematic issues. Furthermore, the presidency briefs non-Council members on the Council's programme of work at the beginning of each month, and that information is made readily available on the Council website. We would like to commend Portugal's chairmanship of the Informal Working Group this year, under which the Group realized a notable achievement by issuing a presidential note in June (S/2012/402) concerning conference resources and interactivity. Since then, we understand that the Working Group has been actively addressing other issues, such as penholders in the drafting of resolutions and chairpersons of subsidiary organs, inter alia. We look forward to seeing the results of such discussions adopted by the Council in due course so that the wider

membership can better understand how the Council intends to conduct its work in the future.

While acknowledging the progress made to date, it is essential to further enhance the transparency of the Council by steadily implementing note 507. The efforts and cooperation of the Council, especially of the permanent members, are indispensable for achieving real progress in that area. Of course, periodic review of the progress is necessary.

We all recall that last May, the group of five small nations presented a draft resolution that had a direct bearing on the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, but in the end the group withdrew the draft resolution. The Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Mr. Paul Seger, stated,

> "We have listened carefully to the statements of the permanent members of the Security Council that they are ready to consider our recommendations seriously, and we hold them to their promise, with the Assembly as witness... If we see some real substantive progress starting within the next months, our efforts will not have been in vain" (*A/66/PV.108, p. 6*).

Now we would like to know whether any tangible progress has been made since then.

The participation of many non-Council members in today's meeting further testifies to the fact that the working methods remain a critical issue. Recognizing the importance of that issue, we look forward to seeing the Council — including its newly elected members for the next term — achieve greater progress in that regard. I would like to reiterate Japan's determination to continue to actively contribute to promoting improvement in the working methods.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Chua (Singapore): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate. I will deliver a shortened version of my statement; a longer version is being circulated in the Chamber.

As is well known, Singapore strongly supports Security Council reform, particularly in the area of working methods. The working methods of the Security Council are of fundamental interest to all Member States. The Council has the power to authorize military action and international sanctions — decisions that are binding on all Member States. Through the veto, the five permanent members (P-5) can also prevent the Council from taking such measures. Yet most of us have no way of influencing the decisions of the Council. We are called and dismissed entirely at the Council's discretion, even on issues that affect our countries directly. We are expected to dutifully contribute to the Council's mandated operations and comply with its decisions or lack thereof, even if they are not in the interests of the international community.

Public statements made by the P-5 would suggest that they share our position on the need for improvements to the Council's working methods. At last year's open debate (S/PV.6672), almost all of the permanent members spoke in support of improving the Council's working methods. This morning, we have also heard various permanent members express similar support for and commitment to reforming the Council's working methods.

My delegation welcomes those commitments. We are therefore puzzled that whenever serious opportunities for improvements in working methods are presented, they are more often than not blocked by none other than the P-5. Naturally, the P-5 will point to an increased number of open meetings and outreach to the general membership as evidence of their commitment to improving working methods. But meetings are no substitute for genuine improvements.

Few issues galvanize the P-5 into a unity of purpose and action as quickly as opposition to working methods reform. Member States are no doubt familiar with what happened in May when the group of five small countries presented draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2, designed to improve the working methods of the Council. The draft resolution's aims were frankly rather modest, and the impact of the recommendations would have been limited even if they had been adopted, but the P-5 resorted to strong-arm tactics in order to ensure that A/66/L.42/Rev.2 never saw the light of day.

One particular incident highlights the P-5's determined resistance to the reform of the Council's working methods, despite whatever they may proclaim to the contrary. In response to a query from the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) gave an interpretation that "it would be appropriate if the General Assembly were to adopt the draft resolution with the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the General Assembly membership". Member States learnt of that legal opinion, not from OLA or even from the President

of the General Assembly, who had first raised the query. Instead, it was a permanent member who faxed and emailed OLA's legal opinion to all Member States the morning of the formal consideration of the draft resolution, with the admonition to all Member States to support a no-action motion on A/66/L.42/Rev.2. How did that P-5 mission procure the OLA's legal opinion, even before the President of the General Assembly himself had circulated it to the United Nations membership? What does that say about the P-5's real position on working methods of the Security Council? Do deeds match words?

Let me cite another example. Draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 had asked the P-5 to consider refraining from vetoing action aimed at preventing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. That aspect was considered particularly controversial by the P-5, which were affronted by the suggestion that limits be placed on the use of their veto power. That position was shared by all the P-5, even those who fervently support the principle of responsibility to protect. Those permanent members that repeatedly express outrage at what is happening within the Council on issues like Syria are the same ones that blocked A/66/L.42/Rev.2. Trumpeting moral outrage over the Council's non-action is particularly hypocritical because whatever divisions there may be among the P-5, they are united in having no limits placed on their use or abuse of the veto.

My statement today is not intended to be a diatribe on the Security Council or the P-5. I hope that I will not be misunderstood. Indeed, my delegation believes that the Security Council, and permanent members in particular, shoulder a long-standing responsibility on behalf of the international community. By and large, the Security Council does good work on behalf of Member States in preserving international peace and security. However, the P-5's continued resistance to constructive proposals on working methods does not serve the interests of the United Nations membership or the legitimacy and transparency of the Security Council, or even ultimately the interests of the P-5 themselves. I hope that it will not take a crisis of seismic proportions to precipitate a fundamental change.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): Egypt associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I would like to commend the Indian presidency of the Security Council for convening today's open debate on the working methods of the Council. I would like also to seize this opportunity to congratulate Argentina, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Luxembourg and Rwanda on their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the years 2013 and 2014. I would also like to thank the outgoing members Colombia, Germany, India, Portugal, and South Africa for their efforts during the years 2011 and 2012.

Reforming the Security Council's working methods is an important component of the overall reform and expansion of the Council in accordance with General Assembly decision 62/557. It is indeed a positive step to have annual open debates in the Security Council on improving the Council's working methods in order to systematically analyse the progress achieved in that regard. Convening such open debates, however, is not an end in itself. The outcome of such debates should reflect the views expressed by non-Council members if the Council is to achieve efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness.

A major concrete step towards improving the working methods of the Council would be to reach an agreement on the Council's provisional rules of procedure, which have been in force for more than 60 years now. The effective functioning of the Council has a direct impact on the general membership of the United Nations.

Egypt appreciates the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the chairmanship of the Permanent Representative of Portugal. We note the adoption of presidential note 402 (S/2012/402), which contains measures on the use of conference services and proposals to enhance interaction during the consultations of the whole. However, greater effort should be made to promote full implementation of presidential note S/2010/507, which was prepared two years ago. For its part, the Secretariat should continue to update the repertoire of the practice of the Security Council as a valuable source of information about the Council's evolving practices on procedural and substantive matters alike. We appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to develop the Security Council web page, making it more informative and user-friendly.

The Security Council's annual report should be more comprehensive and analytical. The General Assembly

should be well informed not only about the decisions adopted by the Council but also about the reasons for those decisions and the backdrops against which they are taken, as well as their impact on situations on the ground. We also expect the Council, in its future annual reports, to add more detailed information on measures taken to improve its working methods in order for progress achieved in that area to be properly assessed. The Council should submit special reports for the General Assembly's consideration, pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter. The General Assembly may also take the initiative and request such reports if it deems them necessary.

Public meetings of the Council, including briefings and debates, should take into account the contributions of non-Council members, particularly those that may be directly affected by the Council's decisions. Private meetings, informal consultations and closed meetings should be kept to a minimum. They should have written records, which should be available to non-Council members. Such records could be made publicly available — at least after a certain period of time, in the way that some Member States release restricted documents after a certain number of years have passed — for the sake of transparency and also as a historical record for the benefit of future generations.

Issues to be covered at any briefing by the Secretariat should be determined in coordination with the concerned State or party and after approval by all Council members. Statements after such briefings should not be restricted to Council members, and the parties concerned should be given the opportunity to express their views on such briefings. Any decision of the Security Council to initiate formal or informal discussions on the situation in any Member State or on any other issues that do not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter. We urge the Council to observe its mandate strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

Members of the Security Council should consult informally with interested Member States, including countries directly involved or affcted, when drafting resolutions or other outcomes of the Council. The penholdership of draft resolutions should not be limited to permanent members.

Egypt welcomes the Council's continuing briefings and consultations designed to help troop-contributing countries plan and fulfil peacekeeping operations mandates. The Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should engage troop-contributing countires more frequently in its deliberations. The Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the countries concerned, should be invited to participate in the Council's meetings when situations in those countries are considered.

When the brutal Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip began, the Security Council managed to convene only one private meeting and closed consultations to address the situation and was unable to decide on convening a public meeting. A body that is entrusted with the responsibility for upholding international peace and security should be able to do more than that. This is a fresh reminder of the urgent need for reform of the Council's working methods.

In conclusion, what is needed is not additional proposals but the political will to implement the multitude of ideas that have been proposed for improving the working methods of the Council. The General Assembly and the Security Council should forge a mutually reinforcing and complementary relationship while respecting each other's mandate. This is essential to achieving the objectives of the United Nations and to enabling it, and us, to remain relevant in addressing the existing and emerging challenges facing the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At a time when the world is witnessing the deterioration of several crises in various parts of the globe, there is only one organ mandated under the Charter of the United Nations to play a key role in preventing, mediating or ending conflicts. That is the Security Council. It sometimes lives up to its mandate and to the expectations of the peoples concerned. It has thus been able to make some decisions in the space of only a few hours, including, for example, resolution 2076 (2012), seeking a way to resolve the crisis in Goma. I hope that the Council will pursue its efforts to stop the violence and to find a framework for a political solution to the crisis.

That said, the Council has proved incapable of reacting quickly to the crisis in Syria and the recent events in Gaza. Similarly, it has shown no haste even in

dealing with more promising developments, such as the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza. In Syria, civilians are dying or being deprived of humanitarian assistance while the Council debates procedural questions.

Six months ago, the group of five small nations introduced draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 in the General Assembly on the Security Council's working methods. While the draft resolution was subsequently withdrawn, the group nonetheless received very positive reactions from the wider membership before, during and after its introduction. Switzerland has repeatedly stressed that change in the Security Council must first come from within. We have always seen improvement of its working methods as an ongoing process during which we should maintain a sustained and constructive dialogue with the Council, which derives its legitimacy from the membership as a whole.

That is why I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to convene this open debate and for drafting a concept note that gives food for thought (S/2012/853, annex). The note is a reminder and an excellent review of the practical measures that can be taken to improve the Council's transparency, efficiency and interaction with the membership of the United Nations as a whole. I take this opportunity to thank another member of the Security Council, whose term ends in a month. Portugal has done valuable work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and I would particularly like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for his personal commitment to that effort. We hope that a new Council member will take up the torch with the same enthusiasm and persistence.

That having been said, we became convinced during the discussions in May with the permanent members of the Security Council of draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 that the Working Group could make substantial progress. Like the representative of Liechstenstein, we believe that the annex to the draft resolution forms a basis for future discussion. While a presidential note on conference resources was indeed adopted (S/2012/402), the second part of that note, which proposed establishing systematic horizon-scanning meetings of the Council with the Department of Political Affairs as a tool of preventive diplomacy, was unfortunately not retained. A second note, on a more transparent way of allocating the chairmanships of subsidiary bodies and penholders within the Council, has still not been adopted. Along with other delegations, we therefore encourage the Council to return to the tradition of regular horizon-scanning and make another effort to finalize the note on subsidiary bodies and the issue of penholders. We also hope that the allocation of committee chairmanships will be more transparent, enabling all members elected in 2013 to participate.

Another aspect that we would like to highlight here is the potential for improving relations between the Security Council and the International Criminal Court. As many countries mentioned during the open debate on the rule of law held on 17 October (S/PV.6849), the Council should consider taking concrete steps to strengthen the synergies between the two bodies. As the representative of Liechtenstein remarked, it could, for example, set up a subsidiary mechanism tasked with addressing questions arising from their relationship.

Finally, the question of the veto must be addressed. Switzerland has repeatedly suggested that member States using the veto be obliged to explain their reasons for doing so and to refrain from blocking action in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Such a practice would be perfectly in line with the spirit of the veto, which was conceived as a mechanism to protect vital national interests. We commend France for its offer to take a step in that direction and encourage other permanent members to follow that example.

Those are just some ideas on ways to continue improving the working methods of the Security Council, which we submit for the Council's consideration. Members have certainly heard ideas from many other delegations, and we hope that the members of the Council will not simply listen patiently to our appeals but will take them up in a constructive spirit. We are aware that there are some encouraging signs, and we applaud the efforts the Council has made to enhance transparency and inclusiveness within the Council itself and in its relations with the wider membership.

Switzerland attaches great importance to the question of Security Council working methods and will continue to engage in joint efforts aimed at improving them. While considerable progress has been achieved in a number of areas, much remains to be done in others. We therefore intend to continue our engagement in the former group of five small nations under a new configuration, and we are currently holding promising consultations to that end. We look forward to continuing the dialogue on working methods in a constructive spirit with all members of the Council.

It is said that imitation is the most sincere sort of complement. We therefore hope that another presidency will imitate yours, Sir, and hold a follow-up debate next year.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the pleasure to speak today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the outset, I would like to convey the Movement's appreciation to the Indian presidency of the Security Council for having convened this important open debate to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the measures set out in the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) and the concept paper (S/2012/853, annex). This open debate will help us direct the discussions towards enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the work of the Security Council and to meet the expectations of the general membership of the United Nations. I would also like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral, Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for his briefing today.

This debate is the fifth on the working methods of the Council. The increased frequency in recent years of holding such debates is indicative of the fact that the Member States attach great importance to this matter. The same interest has been shown by the Non-Aligned Movement. The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at its sixteenth Summit, held this year in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, reiterated their long-standing position on the issue in the relevant paragraphs adopted at the Summit.

At that NAM Summit meeting in Tehran, taking into account the inter-linkage between Security Council reform and improving its working methods, NAM Heads of State and Government underscored the need for United Nations Member States to fully respect the functions and powers of each principal organ of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among these organs within their respective Charter-based functions and powers. They stressed that the Security Council must fully observe all Charter provisions and all General Assembly resolutions, which clarify its relationship with the latter organ and other principal organs. In this context, they affirmed that Article 24 of the Charter does not necessarily provide the Security Council with the competence to address issues that fall within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, including in the areas of norm-setting, legislation, administrative and budgetary matters, and establishing definitions, bearing in mind that the Assembly is primarily tasked with the progressive development of international law and its codification.

In this regard, the meeting expressed its grave concern over the increasing and continuing encroachment by the Council on issues that clearly fall within the functions and powers of other principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies. It further stressed that close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs are indispensable in order to enable the United Nations to remain relevant and capable of meeting the existing, new and emerging threats and challenges.

The NAM Summit also recommended, inter alia, the following. It urged all States to uphold the primacy of and full respect for the provisions of the United Nations Charter pertaining to the functions and powers of the Assembly and called on the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council to conduct regular discussions and coordination among themselves regarding the agenda and programme of work of the respective principal organs that they represent in order to establish increased coherence and complementarity among those organs in a mutually reinforcing manner, respectful of each other's mandates, and with a view to generating a mutual understanding among them, in whom the members of the respective organs that they represent have vested in good faith their trust and confidence.

It also welcomed as a step forward the informal meetings between the Presidents of the Council and Member States regarding the preparation of the annual report of the Security Council, including those convened by Viet Nam in 2008, Uganda in 2009, Nigeria in 2010, Germany in 2011 and Colombia in 2012, and called for more regular interaction between presidencies of the Security Council and the wider membership of the United Nations, which could help enhance the quality of such reports.

It called on the Security Council to submit a more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the work of the Council, including in such cases where the Council has failed to act, and the views expressed by its members during the consideration of the agenda items under its consideration. It further called on the Security Council

to elaborate on the circumstances under which it adopts different outcomes, whether resolutions, presidential statements, press statements or remarks to the press.

It called on the Security Council, pursuant to Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, to submit special reports for the consideration of the General Assembly. It further called on the Security Council to ensure that its monthly assessments are comprehensive, analytical and issued in a timely fashion. The General Assembly may consider proposing parameters for the elaboration of such assessments.

It called on the Security Council to fully take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly on matters relating to international peace and security, consistent with Article 11 of the Charter.

The Security Council should avoid resorting to Chapter VII of the Charter as a tool for addressing issues that do not necessarily pose a threat to international peace and security. It should fully utilize the provisions of other relevant chapters, including Chapters VI and VIII, before invoking Chapter VII, which should be a measure of last resort.

The Non-Aligned Movement notes the presidential note of 5 June (S/2012/402), which expresses the commitment of members to several efficiency-enhancing measures with regard to the working methods, including on the management of the Council's programme of work, its meetings and their periodicity, conference resources and interactivity, in maintaining closer contact between the Security Council and United Nations missions in the field.

The Security Council has taken some positive steps pursuant to note 507. The Movement notes the increase in the number of public meetings, and expects that such an increase will be accompanied by a qualitative improvement through the provision of real opportunities and more meaningful exchanges of view in order to take into account the contributions of non-Council members, particularly those whose interests are or may be directly affected by possible decisions of the Council. Furthermore, the concerned non-Council member should be given the opportunity to express its views and position on such briefings.

The general observations and positions formulated by numerous non-members of the Security Council during its debates, including open debates, should be properly taken into account in any possible outcome of those debates and should be reflected in the Council's annual report. NAM appreciates the more frequent convening of Arria Formula meetings as a practical way to ensure more interaction with non-Council members and regional and subregional organizations. It also appreciates the holding of informal wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency to evaluate what has been achieved.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the continued briefings and consultations of the Council with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) as part of the effort to plan and to execute peacekeeping operations more effectively and with clearer mandates. The Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should involve TCCs more frequently and more intensively in its deliberations through sustained, regular and timely interaction.

To increase the transparency of its work, to achieve a balanced approach in interaction with non-members and to improve the efficiency of its working methods, the Council should seriously address the shortcomings and take into consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter and the resolutions that clarify its relationship with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations.

Finally, the Movement believes that more steps are needed, along with the necessary political will on the part of Member States, particularly the permanent members of the Council, to improve the working methods of the Council through both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Transparency, accountability and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures. Every effort should be made to render the Council more democratic, representative and accountable. In that way, the Security Council can deal more efficiently and effectively with its increasing workload and with the multiplicity and complexity of the issues on its agenda in maintaining international peace and security. The Non-Aligned Movement stands ready to contribute to the achievement of those goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. Anderson (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council and for the excellent concept paper (S/2012/853, annex) that you circulated to help guide our discussion today.

At the outset, let me state our clear view that the question of improving the working methods of the Security Council is a matter of legitimate interest to all Member States. We fully respect the prerogatives of the Security Council regarding its own working methods, but we must never forget that the Council acts on behalf of the world community on matters of peace and security and that Member States are individually and collectively bound by its decisions. Accordingly, we have a direct interest in understanding its decision-making processes and in working to ensure that those processes operate with the maximum transparency and accountability for all of us, who are pledged to be bound by its decisions.

Ireland has been a consistent supporter of initiatives aimed at improving the working methods of the Security Council, notably those proposed in recent years by the group of five small nations. We acknowledge that members of the Council have shown a willingness to respond to aspects of those initiatives, as well as the fact that steps have been taken internally by the Council in the form of agreement on presidential notes. Those developments address some of the concerns raised by non-Council members. Such steps are welcome in themselves, but we believe that much more needs to be done to improve the transparency and accountability of the workings of the Council.

A wealth of ideas and suggestions for improving the Council's working methods has been proposed in recent years. A number of them are set down in the concept paper. For the sake of brevity, today I will confine myself to mentioning just a few elements that fall under the overall headings of transparency, accountability and openness.

First, there is the overriding requirement to take measures that will add structure to the Council's working methods and that make them more transparent to the wider membership. That would ideally involve the adoption of formal rules of procedure and the inclusion of an analytical element on the implementation of its working methods in the Council's annual report.

Secondly, there is the need to improve accountability in relation to the missions and operations mandated by the Council, which are a key output of its work. That could, for example, include the provision of more detailed and timely information to Member States on all aspects of operations and missions, as well as more regular participation by troop – and police-contributing countries in informal discussions on the missions and operations in which they participate, and on ways to improve the drafting and refining of relevant mandates.

Thirdly, we wish to see greater openness towards the wider membership with regard to the Council's day-to-day work. There are many potential areas for improvement in that connection. One example would be the provision of regular briefings to the membership on the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies. Another would involve seeking the views of the membership on the Council's annual report at the time of its drafting.

We believe that those and many other ideas are worthy of consideration by the members of the Council. Today's annual debate provides a welcome one-off opportunity to discuss such issues, but what is really needed is a rolling dialogue on the matters between the Council and the wider United Nations membership in the period ahead. For our part, we are ready to participate in such a dialogue.

Finally, I know that some members have expressed reticence about moving ahead on working methods, noting that that issue is but one element of the comprehensive agenda for reform of the Security Council. I understand such concerns, given the sharp divisions within the membership on certain aspects of the overall reform agenda. Like others, we are frustrated by the lack of progress on a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, on which discussions remain stalled after almost 20 years.

However, the issue of working methods is unique among the elements of the prospective comprehensive reform in that it applies to the currently configured Council equally as it would to a reformed Council. The role of the Security Council in today's world is too important to leave on indefinite hold our wish to see a more effective and transparent Council, accountable to the community of nations on whose behalf it carries out its vital work.

I believe that the great majority of States Members of the United Nations want to see improvements in the working methods of the Security Council that will ensure that the work of the Council is more effective and more transparent to the wider membership. It is incumbent upon all of us to put aside our individual political agendas and work for sensible and practical changes that are readily attainable. Even modest success in this important area will help to build the wider confidence that will enable us over time to meet the more complex challenges of comprehensive reform.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.